

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3193

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY LONDON

UNCLAS PRETORIA 4411

E.O. 116524 N/AA

TAGS: SF PINT

SUBJECT: PRP AND UP BATTLE WHILE NATS DEMONSTRATE STRENGTH

1. PROGRESSIVE REFORM PARTYS (PRP) 435-VOTE MARGIN OVER UNITED PARTY (UP) IN TRANSVAAL PROVINCIAL COUNCIL BY-ELECTION IN BRYANSTON CONSTITUENCY (UPPER AND MIDDLE CLASS NORTHERN JOHANNESBURG SUBURBS) NOV 12 CAPPED HEATED AND HEAVILY FINANCED CAMPAIGN IN WHICH NEWLY MERGED PROGS AND EX-UP REFORMISTS TESTED METTLE AGAINST UP FOR FIRST TIM. PRP CAMPAIGN PROPAGANDA FOCUSSED ON UP AS "INEFFECTIVE" OFFICIAL OPPOSITION AND MADE MUCH OF SPECULATION ON POSSIBLE COALITION BETWEEN UP AND NT FORCES. ATTEMPT BY UP LEADER SIR DEVILLIERS GRAAF TO TAKE OVER SAAN NEWSPAPERS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NATIONALI T-LEANING LOUIS LUYT WAS PROPAGANDA GODSEND FOR PRP. FOR ITS PARTS, UP CHARGED THAT PRP WOULD "HANDOVER" SUTH AFRICA TO BLACKS. WIFE OF UP AREA MAYOR SET TONE OF UP CAMPAIGN WHEN SHE WAS OVERHEARD SAYING THAT VOTE FOR PROGS WAS "VOTE FOR KAFFIRS IN YOUR SWIMMING POOL" UP LEADERSHIP DIS-AVOWED LANGUAGE BUT MADE MUCH OF ALLEGATION (WHICH ACTUALLY INCORRECT) THAT PROGS IN FAVOR OF ENFORMCED INTEGRA-TION OF PUBLIC AMENITIES SUCH AS POOLS, PUBLIC TOILETS,
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ETC. DESPITE CHARGE AND COUNTERCHARGE PROBABLY MOST

SIGNIFICANT FACTOR IN PRP WIN WAS ITS SUPERIOR ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY WHICH ENABLED IT TO PULL MANY NOMINALLY APATHETIC VOTERS TO POLS.

2. UP BIENNIAL NATIONAL CONGRESS MET IN BLOEMFONTEIN COINCIDENTALLY NOV 12-14. CONGRESS DISAPPOINTED BUT NOT OVERWHELMED BY PRP ELECTION VICTORY. UP LEADER GRAAF CRITICIZED TRANSVAAL UP MACHINERY AND CONGRESS VOTED TO ALLOW LEADERSHIP TO REVAMP PARTY ORGANISATION. GRAAF ALSO GIVEN STRONG DISCIPLINARY POWERS TO KEEP PARTY MEMBERS IN LINE AND DISSUADE THEM FROM MAKING INDEPENDENT STATEMENTS WHICH ARE THEN " MISINTERPRETED AND DISTORTED" BY ENGLISH LANGUAGE PRESS. HEAVIEST INVECTIVE OF CONGRESS DIRECTED AT "PROG-SUPPORTING" NEWSPAPERS. CONGRESS VOTED TO INVESTIGATE POSSIBILITY OF STARTING OWN DAILY NEWSPAPER AND GRAAF'S SAAN TAKEOVER ATTEMPT APPLAUDED. WITH BULK OF REFORMIST HAVING LEFT PARTY, UP CONGRESS APPEARED TO BE ESSENTIALLY CONSERVATIVE IN OUTLOOK. (DETAILS OF BRYANSTON BH-ELECTION AND UP CONGRESS WILL BE SUBMITTED BY AIRGRAM.)

3. WHILE UP AND PROGS RIPPED EACH OTHER APART, NATIONAL PARTY ENGAGED IN IMPRESSIVE DISPLAY OF POLITICAL MUSCLE IN BELLVILLE CONSTITUENCY NEAR CAPE TOWN WHERE NOV 12 ELECTION SAW NAT PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATE (TO REPLACE LOUIS PIENAAR, NOW AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE) BULLDOZE OVER TWO SPLINTER PARTY CANDIDATES WITH PLURALITY OF NEARLY 7,000 VOTES. OPPOSITION IN ELECTION NEVER PRESENTED SERIOUS CHALLENGE BUT NAT PARTY MACHINERY WAS INTENT ON DEMONSTRATING ITS STRENGTH, WHICH IT EFFECTIVELY DID. BOWDLER

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